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## Labour Bill is defeated in Legislative Council

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

In a reversal, hours before the Karnataka legislature session came to an end on Saturday night, the Legislative Council defeated the Bill introduced to bring changes to three crucial labour laws.

The Industrial Disputes and Certain Other Laws (Karnataka Amendment) Bill, 2020, which the labour unions had opposed, had been passed by the Legislative Assembly earlier.

Soon after Labour Minister Shivaram Hebbar moved the Bill for consideration of the House, ruling party member Ayanur Manjunath said the proposed changes in the labour laws are anti-labour and against international labour conventions.

Speaking on the changes being brought to the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947, raising the threshold limit from 100 to 300 for the industries to seek government permission for closure, layoff or retrenchment, he said: "Industrialists were already misusing the provisions when the threshold was 100. With this amendment, there is threat of government losing control over industries."



Labour Minister Shivaram Hebbar greeting JD(S) leader H.D. Revanna during the legislative session on Friday.

He said if thousands of industries misuse this Act, there would be large-scale unemployment.

On the proposed changes to Factories Act to increase working hours, Mr. Manjunath said it is "inhuman" and goes against the agreed international labour convention. "Working hours have been fixed considering health and efficiency of the worker," he said. He, however, supported the Bill considering the current industrial and unemployment conditions.

Meanwhile, the Opposition Benches urged the Minister to make provisions to protect labour and reintroduce the Bill, or refer it to the select committee, or withdraw the bill. While the Mi-

nister urged the Opposition to pass the Bill, tempers flared and the Opposition demanded division of votes. Congress Chief Whip M. Narayan Swamy tore a copy of the Bill. Senior Congress member B.K. Hariprasad said the Bill has been modelled on Gujarat where unions do not exist.

Leader of the House Srinivasa Poojary accused the Opposition of setting a bad precedent by asking for division of votes because the combined Opposition - Congress and JD(S) - had the number on their side in the 75-member Upper House. Chairman K. Prathap Chandra Shetty allowed voting in which the Bill was defeated with 26 voting against and 14 in favour.